

DRAFT

In the Claims

Please replace all prior versions of the claims in the application with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) A boot comprising:

a boot body having a lower region adapted to cover a foot of a wearer and an upper region adapted to cover at least a portion of a shin of the wearer, the boot body having a tongue opening disposed in a shin-toe direction and a tongue disposed within the tongue opening, the boot body having medial and lateral sides, with the tongue opening having a width defined between the medial and lateral sides;

a first lacing zone comprising a first lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a first region of the boot, the first lace having a portion that is disposed in the upper region; and

a second lacing zone comprising a second lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a second region of the boot, the second lace having a portion that is disposed in the upper region;

wherein both the first lace and the second lace are securable in the upper region.

2. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 1, wherein the first lacing zone comprises a lower lacing zone and wherein the first lace comprises a lower lace that is adapted to tighten the lower region.

3. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 2, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region.

DRAFT

4. (Original) The boot of claim 1, further comprising at least one lace lock mounted to the boot body at the upper region thereof, the at least one lace lock being adapted to secure at least one of the first and second laces.

5. (Original) The boot of claim 4, wherein the at least one lace lock comprises a first lace lock adapted to secure the first lace and a second lace lock adapted to secure the second lace.

6. (Original) The boot of claim 5, wherein the first and second lace locks comprise lace cleats, each cleat comprising a body having opposing walls with locking teeth formed on each wall, the walls converging to form a wedge-shaped channel, the channel and locking teeth cooperating to hold a portion of the lace within the body of the cleat.

7. (Original) The boot of claim 6, wherein the boot body includes a tongue opening disposed in a shin-to-toe direction and a tongue disposed within the opening, wherein each cleat is mounted to the boot body such that each wedge-shaped channel is substantially parallel to the tongue opening.

8. (Original) The boot of claim 1, wherein the boot body comprises a body wall, a first lace channel is disposed in the body wall, a portion of the first lace is disposed within the first lace channel.

9. (Original) The boot of claim 8, further comprising a second lace channel disposed in the body wall, a portion of the second lace is disposed within the second lace channel.

DRAFT

10. (Original) The boot of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of lace guides adapted to receive one of the first and second laces, at least a subset of the plurality of lace guides having a generally C-shaped guiding surface.

11. (Original) The boot of claim 10, wherein at least one of guides comprises at least a partially closed guide that is adapted to capture the lace and prevent the lace from dislodging from the guide when tension in the lace is relieved.

12. (Original) The boot of claim 11, wherein one of the guides comprises an open guide that is adapted to permit the lace to dislodge from the guide when tension in the lace is relieved.

13. (Original) The boot of claim 12, further comprising a release strap coupled to at least one of the first and second laces, the release strap being graspable by the wearer to remove the lace from the open guide to create slack in the lace.

14. (Original) The boot of claim 1, wherein each of the first and second laces is laced in a lacing pattern characterized in that the lace follows a meandering path and does not cross over itself.

15. (Original) The boot of claim 1, wherein the first lace and the second lace may be tightened independently to achieve different levels of tightness in the first and the second lacing zones.

16. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 1, further comprising a first handle coupled to the first lace, the first handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the first lace.

DRAFT

17. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 16, further comprising a second handle coupled to the second lace, the second handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the second lace.

18. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 17, wherein the boot body and the first and second handles cooperate to stow the first and second handles on the boot body.

19. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 18, wherein the boot body comprises at least one pocket adapted to receive at least one of the first and second handles.

20. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 19, wherein the at least one pocket comprise an elongate opening disposed in a wall of the boot body at the upper region and extending in a substantially vertical orientation.

21. (Original) The boot of claim 20, wherein the at least one pocket comprises first and second pockets, the first pocket is adapted to receive the first handle, and the second pocket is adapted to receive the second handle, and wherein the first pocket is disposed on a first side of the boot body and the second pocket is disposed on a second side of the boot body.

22. (Original) The boot of claim 2, wherein the lower lace comprises a first anchor end attached to the boot body adjacent a toe-area.

23. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 22, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region and wherein the upper lace comprises a second anchor end attached to the boot body adjacent a shin-area.

DRAFT

24. (Original) The boot of claim 1, further comprising an indicator to indicate to the wearer that a lace corresponds to a particular lacing zone.

25. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 1, wherein the boot body includes a rear side, wherein both the first lace and the second lace are securable in the upper region at a location forward of the rear side.

26. (Original) The boot of claim 1, wherein the boot is a snowboard boot.

27. (Currently Amended) A boot comprising:

a boot body having a lower region adapted to cover a foot of a wearer, an upper region adapted to cover at least a portion of a shin of the wearer, and a rear side that faces backward when the boot is worn by the wearer, the boot body having a tongue opening disposed in a shin-toe direction and a tongue disposed within the tongue opening, the boot body having medial and lateral sides, with the tongue opening having a width defined between the medial and lateral sides;

a first lacing zone comprising a first lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a first region of the boot, the first lace having a portion that is disposed in the upper region; and

a second lacing zone comprising a second lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a second region of the boot, the second lace having a portion that is disposed in the upper region;

wherein both the first lace and the second lace are securable at a location forward of the rear side.

DRAFT

28. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 27, wherein the first lacing zone comprises a lower lacing zone and wherein the first lace comprises a lower lace that is adapted to tighten the lower region.

29. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 28, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region.

30. (Original) The boot of claim 27, further comprising at least one lace lock mounted to the boot body at the upper region thereof, the at least one lace lock is adapted to secure at least one of the first and second laces.

31. (Original) The boot of claim 30, wherein the at least one lace lock comprises a first lace lock adapted to secure the first lace and a second lace lock adapted to secure the second lace.

32. (Original) The boot of claim 31, wherein the first and second lace locks comprise lace cleats, each cleat comprising a body having opposing walls with locking teeth formed on each wall, the walls converging to form a wedge-shaped channel, the channel and locking teeth cooperating to hold a portion of the lace within the body of the cleat.

33. (Original) The boot of claim 32, wherein the boot body includes a tongue opening disposed in a shin-to-toe direction and a tongue disposed within the opening, wherein each cleat is mounted to the boot body such that each wedge-shaped channel is substantially parallel to the tongue opening.

34. (Original) The boot of claim 27, wherein the boot body comprises a body wall, a first lace channel is disposed in the body wall, a portion of the first lace is disposed within the first

DRAFT

lace channel.

35. (Original) The boot of claim 34, further comprising a second lace channel disposed in the body wall, a portion of the second lace is disposed within the second lace channel.

36. (Original) The boot of claim 27, further comprising a plurality of lace guides adapted to receive one of the first and second laces, at least a subset of the plurality of lace guides having a generally C-shaped guiding surface.

37. (Original) The boot of claim 36, wherein at least one of guides comprises at least a partially closed guide that is adapted to capture the lace and prevent the lace from dislodging from the guide when tension in the lace is relieved.

38. (Original) The boot of claim 37, wherein one of the guides comprises an open guide that is adapted to permit the lace to dislodge from the guide when tension in the lace is relieved.

39. (Original) The boot of claim 38, further comprising a release strap coupled to at least one of the first and second laces, the release strap being graspable by the wearer to remove the lace from the open guide to create slack in the lace.

40. (Original) The boot of claim 27, wherein each of the first and second laces is laced in a lacing pattern characterized in that the lace follows a meandering path and does not cross over itself.

41. (Original) The boot of claim 27, wherein the first lace and the second lace may be tightened independently to achieve different levels of tightness in the first and the second lacing zones.

DRAFT

42. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 27, further comprising a first handle coupled to the first lace, the first handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the first lace.

43. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 42, further comprising a second handle coupled to the second lace, the second handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the second lace.

44. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 43, wherein the boot body and the first and second handles cooperate to stow the first and second handles on the boot body.

45. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 44, wherein the boot body comprises at least one pocket adapted to receive at least one of the first and second handles.

46. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 45, wherein the at least one pocket comprise an elongate opening disposed in a wall of the boot body at the upper region and extending in a substantially vertical orientation.

47. (Original) The boot of claim 46, wherein the at least one pocket comprises first and second pockets, the first pocket is adapted to receive the first handle, and the second pocket is adapted to receive the second handle, and wherein the first pocket is disposed on a first side of the boot body and the second pocket is disposed on a second side of the boot body.

48. (Original) The boot of claim 28, wherein the lower lace comprises a first anchor end attached to the boot body adjacent a toe-area.

DRAFT

49. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 48, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region and wherein the upper lace comprises a second anchor end attached to the boot body adjacent a shin-area.

50. (Original) The boot of claim 27, further comprising an indicator to indicate to the wearer that a lace corresponds to a particular lacing zone.

51. (Cancelled)

52. (Original) The boot of claim 27, wherein the boot is a snowboard boot.

53.-126. (Cancelled)

127. (Previously Presented) A soft snowboard boot comprising:
a boot body formed of flexible material, the boot body having a lower region adapted to cover a foot of a rider and an upper region adapted to cover at least a portion of a shin of the rider;
a plurality of lace guides mounted to the boot body, at least one of the lace guides comprising a lace hook;

a first lacing zone comprising a first lace and a first lace lock mounted to the boot body in the upper region, the first lace being guided by the lace guides and cooperating with the lower region, the first lace adapted to extend through and engage with the first lace lock to tighten the lower region, the first lace having a portion that extends from the lower region to the upper region and is disposed in the upper region so as to be engageable with the first lace lock;

a second lacing zone comprising a second lace and a second lace lock mounted to the boot body in the upper region, the second lace being guided by the lace guides and the lace hook and cooperating with the upper region, the second lace having a portion that is disposed in the upper

DRAFT

region, the second lace adapted to extend through and engage with the second lace lock to tighten the upper region;

wherein both the first and second laces may be secured by the first and second lace locks, respectively, in the upper region at a location forward of a rear side of the boot body; and

a release strap coupled to the second lace, the release strap being graspable to remove the second lace from the hook so as to create slack in the second lace.

128. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 1, wherein both the first lace and the second lace are sequentially or simultaneously securable at the upper region.

129. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 24, wherein the indicator comprises a first indicator on the first lace, wherein the first indicator comprises the word "LOWER".

130. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 24, wherein the indicator comprises a second indicator on the second lace, wherein the second indicator comprises the word "UPPER".

131. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 27, wherein both the first lace and the second lace are sequentially or simultaneously securable at the location forward of the rear side.

132. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 50, wherein the indicator comprises a first indicator on the first lace, wherein the first indicator comprises the word "LOWER".

133. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 50, wherein the indicator comprises a second indicator on the second lace, wherein the second indicator comprises the word "UPPER".

134. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 1, wherein each of the first lace and the second lace has a portion that extends to an upper part of the upper region.

DRAFT

135. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 27, wherein each of the first lace and the second lace has a portion that extends to an upper part of the upper region.

136. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 127, wherein each of the first lace and the second lace has a portion that is disposed at an upper part of the upper region.

137. (Currently Amended) A boot comprising:

a boot body having a lower region adapted to cover a foot of a wearer and an upper region adapted to cover at least a portion of a shin of the wearer, the boot body having a tongue opening disposed in a shin-toe direction and a tongue disposed within the tongue opening, the boot body having medial and lateral sides, with the tongue opening having a width defined between the medial and lateral sides;

a first lacing zone comprising a first lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a first region of the boot, the first lace having a portion that is disposed at the upper region;

a second lacing zone comprising a second lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a second region of the boot, the second lace having a portion that is disposed at the upper region;

wherein both the first lace and the second lace are securable at the upper region; and
an indicator to indicate to the wearer that a lace corresponds to a particular lacing zone.

138. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, wherein the indicator comprises a first indicator on the first lace, wherein the first indicator comprises the word "LOWER".

139. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, wherein the indicator comprises a second indicator on the second lace, wherein the second indicator comprises the word "UPPER".

DRAFT

140. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, wherein the first lacing zone comprises a lower lacing zone and wherein the first lace comprises a lower lace that is adapted to tighten the lower region.

141. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 140, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region.

142. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, further comprising at least one lace lock mounted to the boot body at the upper region thereof, the at least one lace lock being adapted to secure at least one of the first and second laces.

143. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 142, wherein the at least one lace lock comprises a first lace lock adapted to secure the first lace and a second lace lock adapted to secure the second lace.

144. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, wherein the first lace and the second lace may be tightened independently to achieve different levels of tightness in the first and the second lacing zones.

145. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, further comprising a first handle coupled to the first lace, the first handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the first lace.

146. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 145, further comprising a second handle coupled to the second lace, the second handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the second lace.

DRAFT

147. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 146, wherein the boot body and the first and second handles cooperate to stow the first and second handles on the boot body.

148. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 147, wherein the boot body comprises at least one pocket adapted to receive at least one of the first and second handles.

149. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 148, wherein the at least one pocket comprise an elongate opening disposed in a wall of the boot body at the upper region and extending in a substantially vertical orientation.

150. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 149, wherein the at least one pocket comprises first and second pockets, the first pocket is adapted to receive the first handle, and the second pocket is adapted to receive the second handle, and wherein the first pocket is disposed on a first side of the boot body and the second pocket is disposed on a second side of the boot body.

151. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, wherein the boot body includes a rear side, wherein both the first lace and the second lace are securable at the upper region at a location forward of the rear side.

152. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, wherein the boot is a snowboard boot.

153. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, wherein each of the first lace and the second lace have a portion that extends to an upper part of the upper region.

154. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, wherein the first lace has a portion that is disposed in the upper region, wherein the second lace has a portion that is disposed in the upper region, and wherein both the first lace and the second lace are securable in the upper region.

DRAFT

155. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 137, further comprising a first handle coupled to the first lace, the first handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the first lace, wherein a first indicator is disposed on the first handle.

156. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 155, further comprising a second handle coupled to the second lace, the second handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the second lace, wherein a second indicator is disposed on the second handle.

157. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 155, wherein the first lacing zone comprises a lower lacing zone and wherein the first lace comprises a lower lace that is adapted to tighten the lower region, wherein the first indicator comprises the word "LOWER".

158. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 156, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region, wherein the second indicator comprises the word "UPPER".

159. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 157, further comprising a second handle coupled to the second lace, the second handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the second lace, wherein a second indicator is disposed on the second handle, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region, wherein the second indicator comprises the word "UPPER".

DRAFT

160. (Currently Amended) A boot comprising:

a boot body having a lower region adapted to cover a foot of a wearer, an upper region adapted to cover at least a portion of a shin of the wearer, and a rear side that faces backward when the boot is worn by the wearer, the boot body having a tongue opening disposed in a shin-toe direction and a tongue disposed within the tongue opening, the boot body having medial and lateral sides, with the tongue opening having a width defined between the medial and lateral sides;

a first lacing zone comprising a first lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a first region of the boot, the first lace having a portion that is disposed at the upper region;

a second lacing zone comprising a second lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a second region of the boot, the second lace having a portion that is disposed at the upper region;

wherein both the first lace and the second lace are securable at a location forward of the rear side; and

an indicator to indicate to the wearer that a lace corresponds to a particular lacing zone.

161. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, wherein the indicator comprises a first indicator on the first lace, wherein the first indicator comprises the word “LOWER”.

162. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, wherein the indicator comprises a second indicator on the second lace, wherein the second indicator comprises the word “UPPER”.

163. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, wherein the first lacing zone comprises a lower lacing zone and wherein the first lace comprises a lower lace that is adapted to tighten the lower region.

DRAFT

164. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 163, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region.

165. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, further comprising at least one lace lock mounted to the boot body at the upper region thereof, the at least one lace lock being adapted to secure at least one of the first and second laces.

166. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 165, wherein the at least one lace lock comprises a first lace lock adapted to secure the first lace and a second lace lock adapted to secure the second lace.

167. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, wherein the first lace and the second lace may be tightened independently to achieve different levels of tightness in the first and the second lacing zones.

168. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, further comprising a first handle coupled to the first lace, the first handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the first lace.

169. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 168, further comprising a second handle coupled to the second lace, the second handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the second lace.

170. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 169, wherein the boot body and the first and second handles cooperate to stow the first and second handles on the boot body.

DRAFT

171. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 170, wherein the boot body comprises at least one pocket adapted to receive at least one of the first and second handles.

172. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 171, wherein the at least one pocket comprise an elongate opening disposed in a wall of the boot body at the upper region and extending in a substantially vertical orientation.

173. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 172, wherein the at least one pocket comprises first and second pockets, the first pocket is adapted to receive the first handle, and the second pocket is adapted to receive the second handle, and wherein the first pocket is disposed on a first side of the boot body and the second pocket is disposed on a second side of the boot body.

174. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, wherein the boot is a snowboard boot.

175. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, wherein each of the first lace and the second lace have a portion that extends to an upper part of the upper region.

176. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, wherein the first lace has a portion that is disposed in the upper region and wherein the second lace has a portion that is disposed in the upper region.

177. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 160, further comprising a first handle coupled to the first lace, the first handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the first lace, wherein a first indicator is disposed on the first handle.

178. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 177, further comprising a second handle coupled to the second lace, the second handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the second lace, wherein a second indicator is disposed on the second handle.

DRAFT

179. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 177, wherein the first lacing zone comprises a lower lacing zone and wherein the first lace comprises a lower lace that is adapted to tighten the lower region, wherein the first indicator comprises the word “LOWER”.

180. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 178, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region, wherein the second indicator comprises the word “UPPER”.

181. (Previously Presented) The boot of claim 179, further comprising a second handle coupled to the second lace, the second handle being graspable by the wearer to tighten the second lace, wherein a second indicator is disposed on the second handle, wherein the second lacing zone comprises an upper lacing zone and wherein the second lace comprises an upper lace that is adapted to tighten the upper region, wherein the second indicator comprises the word “UPPER”.

182. (Currently Amended) A boot comprising:

a boot body having a lower region adapted to cover a foot of a wearer and an upper region adapted to cover at least a portion of a shin of the wearer, the boot body having a tongue opening disposed in a shin-toe direction and a tongue disposed within the tongue opening, the boot body having medial and lateral sides, with the tongue opening having a width defined between the medial and lateral sides;

a first lacing zone comprising a lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to tighten a first region of the boot, the lace of the first lacing zone having a portion that is disposed in the upper region; and

a second lacing zone comprising a lace coupled to the medial and lateral sides and adapted to draw the medial and lateral sides toward each other to reduce the width of the tongue opening to